

METHAMPHETAMINE:

THE BASICS

TO VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT METHAMPHETAMINE
AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS DANGEROUS
DRUG, VISIT WWW.NCDOJ.COM



Thanks to the North Carolina Methamphetamine Prevention Partnership for its assistance in the preparation of this resource guide.

METHAMPHETAMINE

Methamphetamine, or “meth” is a top concern for law enforcement because it places our families and communities at risk.

Children living in homes where meth is produced are endangered. First responders and social workers who stumble upon a meth lab are harmed. The lives of individuals who are addicted to meth are destroyed. And communities where meth is produced are devastated.

Over the past few years, I have worked to combat meth in North Carolina. Together we have toughened penalties for criminals who make meth or expose children to the process. New restrictions on the sale of key household ingredients used to make meth have reduced the manufacturing of this dangerous drug in our state.

Thank you for joining the fight. With your help, we can bring meth manufacturers to justice and protect North Carolinians from the devastating effects of meth addiction.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Roy Cooper".

Roy Cooper
North Carolina Attorney General





dangerous

meth and meth addicts have something in common

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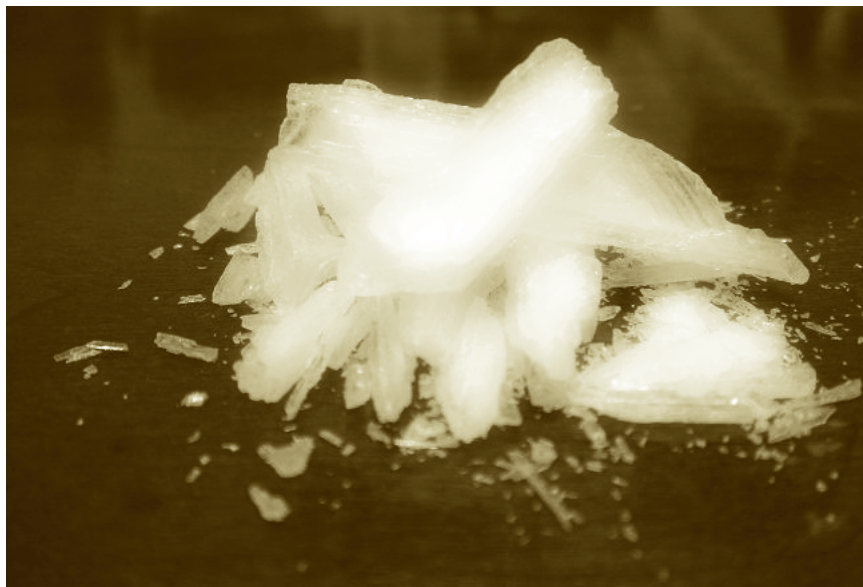
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METH-THE BASICS

WHAT IS METHAMPHETAMINE?

Methamphetamine or “meth” is a highly addictive stimulant that increases activity in the pleasure centers of the brain. It can be smoked, snorted, eaten or injected. In contrast to a cocaine “high,” which wears off in less than an hour, the effects of meth are long-lasting, typically 10 to 12 hours. Slang names for methamphetamine include speed, crank, ice, chalk, go-fast, zip, tweak, and cristy.



METH CRYSTALS

Methamphetamine is produced as pills, capsules, powder or chunks

Methamphetamine is easily produced with non-prescription medicines and household products. Meth's key ingredient is pseudoephedrine, found in many cold medicines. Many meth users learn how to "cook" meth from other addicts or from recipes found on the Internet. The regulation of medicines containing pseudoephedrine has made it more difficult to manufacture meth.

easy
recipes found on the internet



CHEMICALS AND PRODUCTS USED IN METH MANUFACTURING

Alcohol	Lye
Gasoline Additives	Drain Cleaner
Rubbing Alcohol	Battery Acid
Starter Fluid	Lithium
Paint Thinner	Antifreeze
Acetone	Diet Aids
Chloroform	Energy Boosters
Camp stove fuel	Cold Medicine

WHY IS METHAMPHETAMINE DANGEROUS?

Meth use has devastating effects on an addict's mind and body. The drug scrambles the user's brain chemistry. It also raises their blood pressure, placing extraordinary strain on the user's body. Ingestion of a single dose of methamphetamine can cause a heart attack or a stroke.

devastating
single dose of methamphetamine can cause a heart attack or a stroke

HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL EFFECTS

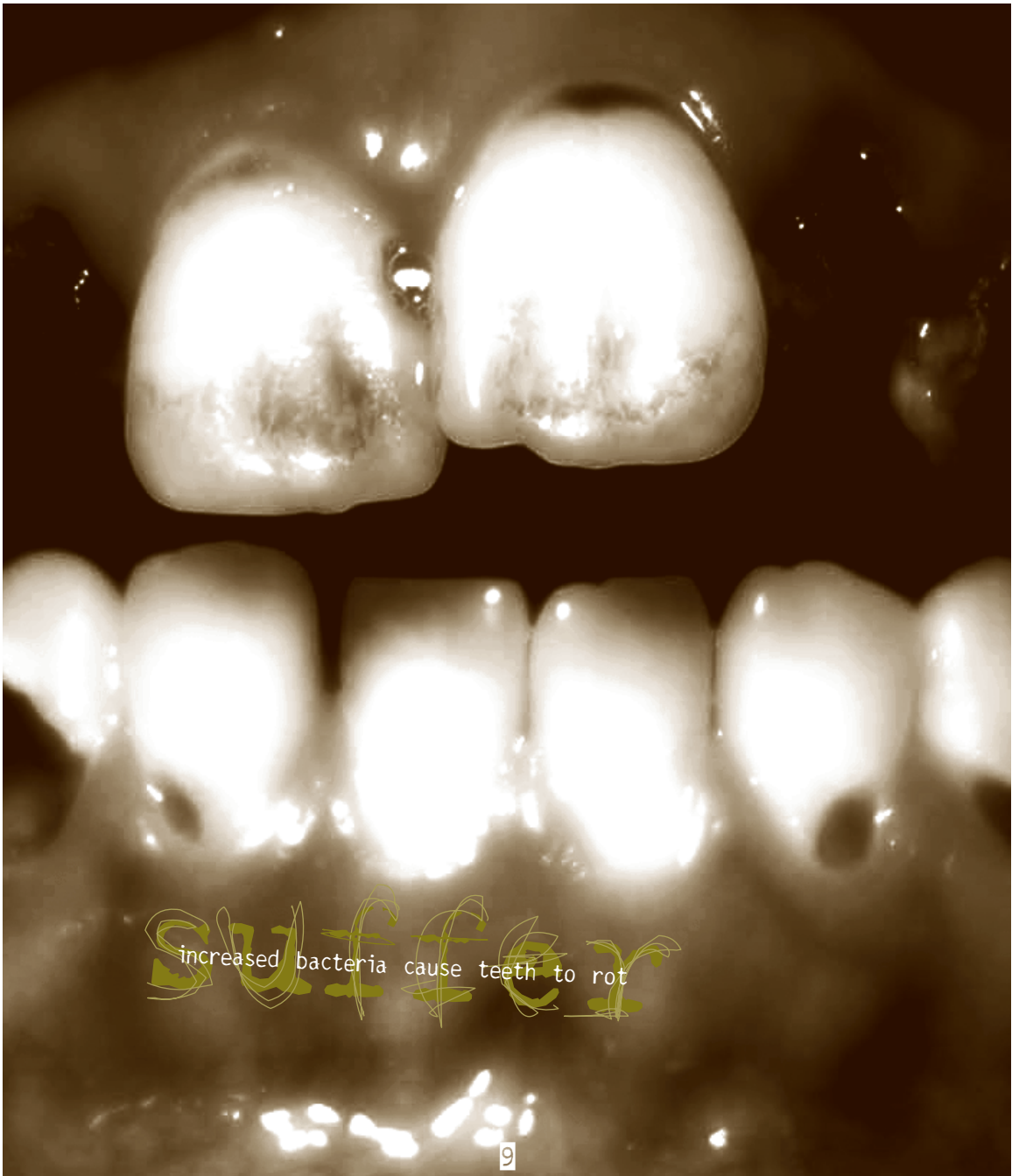
Meth increases activity in the brain's pleasure centers, but the addiction is far from pleasurable. The compulsive need to acquire and use meth becomes the focus of the addict's life. It becomes more important than the user's family, job, or personal well-being. Addicts often commit crimes to obtain meth.



Addicts use the drug for days or even weeks at a time without sleep. Throughout these “binges,” users feel nervous, excited, irritable, paranoid, and aggressive. Ultimately the addict falls into an exhausted sleep that can also last days. When the addict awakens, the cycle resumes.

Long-term meth use disrupts brain function and causes severe side effects. Addicts hallucinate, engage in repetitive behaviors, and experience delusions, such as feeling insects on their skin. Meth addicts also suffer from malnutrition, loss of bone mass, and “meth mouth.”

“METH MOUTH” is a form of severe tooth decay. Meth use dries up saliva needed to wash out **BACTERIA**. Meth mouth causes teeth to rot and fall out. Meth addicts also grind their teeth, which worsens tooth decay.



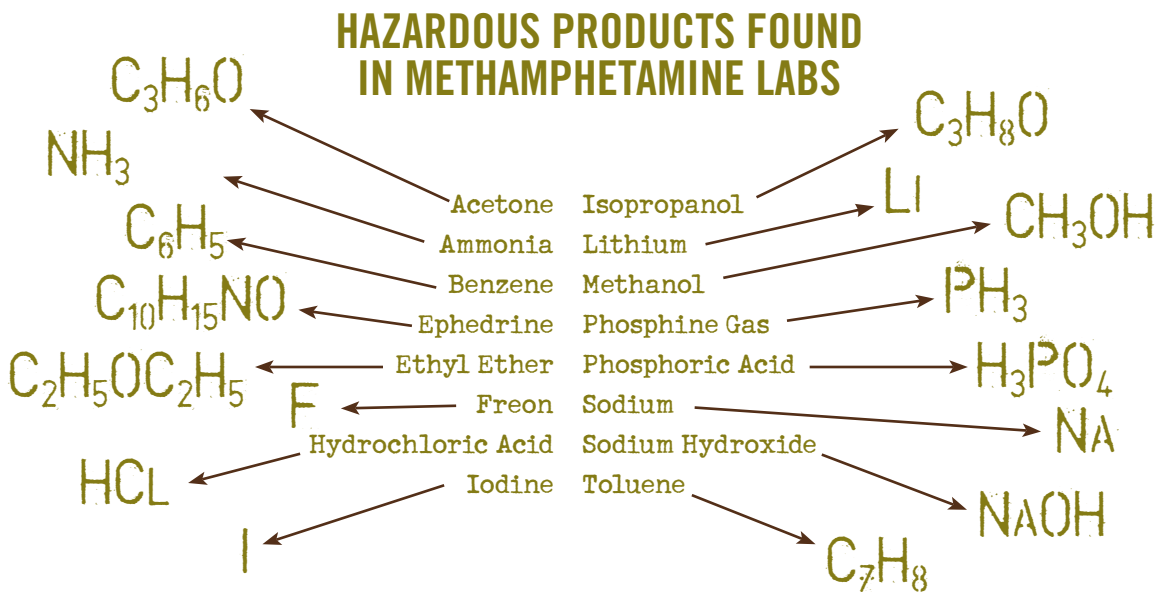
increased bacteria cause teeth to rot



METH LABS

Making meth is a risky process, because meth ingredients are toxic and explosive. Phosphine gas, ammonia vapors, hydrogen chloride gas, and iodine vapors are life-threatening byproducts that are emitted while cooking meth. They cause severe burns, irritate skin and eyes, and damage lungs and kidneys.

Cooking meth endangers both rural and urban communities. Meth labs have been found in homes, apartments, hotels, forests, and even in vehicles. Many are found because they explode or catch fire.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT METH LABS AND HOW TO SPOT THEM,
VISIT WWW.NCDOJ.COM




addicts

almost half of all meth addicts are women

WHO USES METHAMPHETAMINE?

More than 1.4 million Americans have used meth, according to a survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.¹ The typical meth user was once a male between the ages of 18 and 40. This is no longer true. Today, almost half of meth addicts are women. Many began using the drug because they wanted to boost their energy level or lose weight.

Meth use by teenagers is a concern. A recent survey of teens indicates that 6.5 percent of North Carolina's high school students have used meth.² Hispanics account for one quarter of new meth users. In fact, Hispanic teens are two times more likely to use meth than whites and African-Americans.³ The rate of meth use among Native American youth is two to three times that of white youth.

 The North Carolina-based Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has started a hotline for people to report the sale of meth, conducted anti-meth rallies, and developed innovative treatment programs.⁴ Members convicted of dealing drugs are banished from the Cherokee Indian Reservation.⁵

METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKING

Unfortunately, stopping the manufacture of meth in the state would not end our meth problem. Most methamphetamine is produced in large "superlabs" in Mexico and the western United States.

METHAMPHETAMINE ADDICTION . . .

ENDANGERS CHILDREN

All children of drug-addicted parents live with elements of danger. But certain characteristics of meth addiction place children at an even greater risk.

Children of meth users often suffer from neglect, physical abuse, or sexual abuse. When parents crash after a meth high, they sleep for days at a time. Children are forced to fend for themselves. Often older children must take care of their younger siblings. Meth use during pregnancy can result in premature birth. Infants often show abnormal reflexes and signs of addiction including extreme irritability. However, these are only some of the dangers faced by children of meth-addicted parents.

In North Carolina, children have been found in **ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR** meth labs.⁶ The meth cooking process uses hazardous chemicals that contaminate household items such as carpet, furniture, clothing, and toys. Children can inhale chemicals or absorb them through their skin. They may accidentally eat meth, drink hazardous chemicals, or use contaminated utensils. Firearms, syringes, razor blades, and other dangerous items are often left within children's reach. Some addicts even allow their children to help produce meth. *Of the children found living in a meth lab, one in three test positive for traces of meth.*⁷



In western North Carolina, one nine-year-old boy spoke with pride about how smart his father was because his father could mix chemicals for “experiments.” Sometimes the boy would help stir when his father got tired.

To further protect children, under North Carolina law, if a child is living in a meth lab, two years are added to the meth cook's sentence.⁸



DEVASTATES COMMUNITIES

The effects of meth addiction spread throughout a community. Meth addicts often rob people to pay for their habit. Meth addiction has been linked to identity theft, domestic violence, robbery, and assault. Meth users are more likely to engage in unsafe sex and contract sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis. When individuals use meth while undergoing treatment for HIV, meth reduces the effectiveness of their HIV medication which strengthens the virus.

Meth labs also harm the environment. **Every time meth is manufactured, it results in 5 to 7 pounds of toxic waste.** Toxic byproducts may be discarded on roadsides or into creeks, rivers, and sewage systems.

Meth labs endanger those who safeguard the public because they are often the first to discover a clandestine lab. Police, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians may stumble upon a meth lab when responding to an emergency. Exposure to meth labs results in respiratory and eye irritations, headaches, dizziness, nausea, and even death.

Meth labs also endanger social workers who make home visits. Their knock on the door can surprise and further agitate a meth user, triggering paranoia and sparking an aggressive response. Social workers are receiving training to recognize the signs of meth use and production.

A FIREFIGHTER'S STORY

Volunteer firefighter Darien South responded to a “routine” fire in Deep Gap, North Carolina in 2003. After the flames were extinguished, South opened the door to a crawlspace under the mobile home. A toxic brew of chemicals blasted him in the face and he began bleeding from his nose and mouth. The firefighters had been unaware that the structure contained a meth lab.


South nearly died from his injuries. He lost about half of his lung capacity and now must take 10 – 12 medications daily. Darien South continues to serve the Watauga County Volunteer Fire Department in a support role. To hear Darien South tell his story in his own words, visit www.ncdoj.com

...BURDENS TAXPAYERS

One in four meth labs are discovered when they catch fire or explode.⁹ Treating meth-burn victims is difficult and costly. Victims suffer from severe chemical injuries and may have embedded shards of glass in their bodies. Most meth addicts do not have health insurance.

Cleaning up meth labs is expensive. The cost of the initial clean-up that must be done by professional hazardous waste companies averages \$5,000 per lab. Additionally, law enforcement personnel and environmental cleanup crews must wear protective clothing that cannot be reused. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S taxpayers paid \$16.2 million dollars to clean up drug labs in 2003.¹⁰ After a lab has been discovered and cleaned up, homeowners and landlords must also bear the expense of decontaminating the structure before it can be inhabited again safely.

Meth use also strains social services. For example, *two out of three children* found in Watauga County's meth labs are placed in foster care.¹¹ Counties are responsible for compensating foster parents. As more meth addicts are incarcerated, taxpayers are also footing the dental bills caused by meth mouth.



“It takes away your health. It takes away your mental state. It takes away your freedom, it takes away your children. It takes away your home, it takes away your pride, it takes away from everything.”

Misty Ward, Recovering Meth Addict, North Carolina



teach your children about the dangers of the drug
protect

FIGHTING METHAMPHETAMINE

PREVENT: EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS ABOUT METHAMPHETAMINE

The best way to protect your family against methamphetamine is to teach your children about the dangers of the drug. Contact the Partnership for a Drug Free North Carolina at <http://www.drugfreenc.org/> for tips on how to talk to your child about drugs.

TREAT: HELP ADDICTS & FAMILIES OVERCOME ADDICTION

Overcoming meth addiction is difficult, but possible. Studies have shown the most effective treatment is behavioral intervention. Treatment that involves the entire family has proven more successful than strategies that focus on the individual addict. Support groups that use behavioral intervention are also helpful.

To find out about treatment programs in your area, call your local Alcohol and Drug Hotline or visit www.samhsa.gov/ and click on “I need help with... a substance abuse problem” in the upper right corner of the screen. Individuals without health insurance can call **1-800-662-HELP**.

DETECTING SIGNS OF A METH LAB

If you suspect a meth lab in your community, notify law enforcement immediately. **NEVER** examine a suspected meth lab or investigate the premises. Meth labs contain toxic and explosive chemicals. Some labs are even equipped with crude surveillance or booby-traps, and meth addicts are often paranoid, violent and unpredictable.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO DETECT A METH LAB,
VISIT WWW.NCDOJ.COM

SIGNS INCLUDE:

- ★ Powerful odors that may smell like cat urine, ammonia, vinegar, or rotten eggs
- ★ Residents who exhibit paranoid behavior
- ★ Residents who usually stay inside, but always smoke outside
- ★ Residents who have frequent visitors at odd hours
- ★ Residents who burn, bury or dump their trash
- ★ Blackened or covered windows
- ★ Open windows on cold days or at other seemingly inappropriate times
- ★ Dead vegetation, burn pits or “dead spots” in yard
- ★ Trash containing the packaging of the ingredients used to make meth (see page 7)



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Designed by Caroline Okun | Brains Are Pretty



METH ISN'T WORTH IT.

Visit www.ncdoj.com for videos as well as additional information and resources to prevent, detect and treat methamphetamine abuse.